

PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA (PRC) Li Yushu (m)

Li Yushu, the former vice-mayor of Leshan city, Sichuan province was reportedly sentenced to death on 15 January, for allegedly taking bribes and other acts of corruption.

At the end of the trial which began in November 2001, a court in Leshan convicted Li Yushu of taking bribes worth 8.93 million yuan (over one million US dollars) in relation to road projects he supervised while employed as director of the transportation bureau of Leshan city.

Li Yushu has reportedly appealed against his sentence, but successful appeals are rare in China and executions can take place hours after the sentence has been confirmed and the appeal rejected.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

China maintains the death penalty for a large number of offences, including non-violent crimes and economic crimes such as tax and other financial fraud, smuggling and counterfeiting. Execution is by shooting or lethal injection. The death penalty is used extensively, arbitrarily, and frequently as a result of political interference. It is particularly used during periodic "Strike Hard" anti-crime campaigns, when defendants may be sentenced to death for crimes which at other times may be punished by imprisonment.

There is currently a "Strike Hard" anti-crime campaign, which initially targeted violent organized crime, but this has been expanded to include a wide range of other crimes. Amnesty International is concerned that this campaign, which stresses "quick arrest, quick trial and quick results", may influence the proceedings and outcome of criminal trials. Amnesty International has recorded at least 2,960 death sentences and 1,781 executions in China in the three months from April to June 2001. These figures, taken from a limited number of sources, show that more people were executed in China between April and June than in the rest of the world for the last three years.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in Chinese or your own language:

- urging the Chinese authorities to commute the death sentence passed on Li Yushu by a court in Leshan city, Sichuan province;
- expressing deep concern at the arbitrary and massive use of the death penalty in China and its increased use for economic and non-violent crimes, and calling on the government to immediately commute any death sentences handed down as part of the "Strike Hard" anti-crime crackdown;
- acknowledging the right of governments to bring perpetrators of crime to justice, but expressing opposition to the death penalty in all cases as the ultimate form of cruel and inhuman punishment and as a violation of the right to life, as guaranteed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;
- noting that the death penalty has never been shown to have a unique deterrent effect on crime and is brutalizing to all involved in its application.

APPEALS TO:

Premier of the People's Republic of China

ZHU Rongji Zongli

Guowuyuan

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Salutation: Your Excellency

President of the Supreme People's Court of the People's Republic of China
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Salutation: Dear President

Director of the Sichuan Provincial Department of Justice
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Telegram: Director of the Provincial Department of Justice, Chengdu, Sichuan
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Salutation: Dear Director

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PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 27 February 2002.